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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 002883

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL/LP, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN POLICE SEIZE 636 KILOS OF COCAINE AND
ARREST PARLACEN STAFF MEMBER FOR DEALING COCAINE

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1497

1. Summary: On December 4, Honduran authorities seized approximately 636 kilos of cocaine from a truck in San Pedro Sula. The seizure of the drugs was the result of well-executed police work, acting upon a tip that a large amount of drugs would soon be moving through the country. The drugs were discovered in a concealed compartment in the back of a truck. This brings the total amount of cocaine seized this year in Honduras to approximately 5,700 kilos. Also, later that same day, Jorge Alberto Caceres, (a PARLACEN staff member) was arrested for distributing and selling cocaine in the parliament's offices. End Summary.

2. On December 4, Honduran authorities seized approximately 636 kilos of cocaine from a truck in San Pedro Sula. Police initially stopped the vehicle because his windows were completely tinted (Note: It is technically illegal in Honduras to have one's windows 100 percent tinted. End note). After approaching the vehicle, the police noticed that the "very nervous" driver possessed two cellular phones, a radio, and various sets of keys. The driver, who claimed to be from Honduras, then presented "suspicious" identification, and when police asked him some very basic questions about Honduras, he was unable to answer. The police then performed a complete search of the vehicle leading to the discovery of the concealed compartment.

3. According to the Vice Minister of Security, Armando Calidonio, the seizure was the product of an operation led by the National Police, who acted upon general information they had received that a rather large shipment of drugs would soon transit the country. It appears that the 636 kilos were only a part of the original shipment of approximately 1,200 kilos. According to the driver, the remainder had been placed in another identical vehicle. It is suspected that the other half of the shipment has already left the country.

4. In an unrelated incident later that same day, police arrested Jorge Alberto Caceres, a staff member of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), for distributing and selling cocaine in the parliament's offices in Tegucigalpa. Hours before Caceres' arrest, four other men were arrested upon leaving PARLACEN, all of whom were found to be in possession of cocaine, presumably for the purpose of selling it.

5. The sting operation at PARLACEN was part of a month-long investigation, in which government officials claim to have videotaped Caceres selling cocaine on various occasions. A search of Caceres' office came up empty, but authorities presume that the drugs are hidden somewhere else in the PARLACEN complex. (Note: According to press reports, the director of PARLACEN only gave authorities permission to search Caceres' office. End Note). Caceres is the second Honduran at PARLACEN this year to be arrested on drug-related charges. Earlier this year, Cesar Diaz was arrested in Nicaragua when police found seven kilos of heroin in his vehicle (reftel). He was later convicted of trafficking and possession of heroin.

6. These latest seizures bring the total amount of cocaine seized this year in Honduras to approximately 5,700 kilos. This is significantly more than has been seized in the last seven years combined.
Pierce